



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE RESTATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY

JESSE D. BURKS

The Teachers Training School, Albany, N. Y.

Among the notable contributions made by the nineteenth century to the twentieth are two that must always have a profound importance for educational thought and practice. The first of these is the illuminating thought of John Fiske that the human species has reached its supreme position in the evolutionary scale very largely through the gradual lengthening of the period of infancy. The other is the equally significant thought, which has been given its most convincing statement by John Dewey, that the ideal of education is social insight, social interest, and social executive power—the school having no rational end or aim apart from the thought of participation in social life. As principles of interpretation or standards of value, these two thoughts are now accepted by the most progressive students of education as fundamental. The first furnishes the starting-point for modern genetic psychology with its rationalizing influence upon method in education. The second furnishes an intelligible end or aim which vitalizes educational theory and gives substance and motive to the work of the school.

With two conceptions so comprehensive and far-reaching in their application, it might reasonably have been expected that before now we should have a philosophical exposition of educational theory adequate to the demands of twentieth-century life and culture. Every important enlargement of the intellectual horizon and every significant change in social conditions, of course, makes necessary both a restatement of educational theory and a reorganization of educational practice. The varied and radical character of the intellectual and social movements of the nineteenth century gives special emphasis to the present need for educational readjustment. And yet the very rapidity and completeness of the changes that have been going on have made it

inevitable that the readjustment lag far behind the need. Present conceptions of the purpose, content, and method of education are characterized by much confusion and uncertainty; and organized education is unmistakably failing to utilize many of the most significant results of scientific inquiry and to adapt itself to some of the most obvious and urgent needs of the new social order.

It is, accordingly, with the keenest interest that we approach such a book as Dr. William E. Chancellor's *A Theory of Motives, Ideals, and Values in Education*.¹ Here at last, we hopefully think, is a book that proposes to give a restatement of educational theory that shall accord with the philosophical temper and practical needs of the present generation; here we shall find a genuine integration of motives, ideals, and values that will give sharpness and definition to much of the educational thought that is at present out of focus.

If Dr. Chancellor had done nothing more than furnish the chapter-headings and table of contents of this book, he would have performed a service of very considerable value to the educational world. It would be difficult to find, within the covers of a single book, a list of topics more varied, more inclusive, or more stimulating. Well-nigh the entire range of human interests and relations is comprehended in this dazzling catalogue. Property, the family, the church, the state, culture, business, war; morals—social, popular, historical, national, comparative, ideal; individual and race culture; causes of success and failure in life; present subordination and ideal autonomy of the school as an institution; legislation, administration, supervision, and instruction as educational instruments; economics, politics, ethics, and sociology in their relations to education; intelligence, efficiency, and morality as evidences of education; science, art, philosophy, health and holiness as evidences of culture; the psychological, physiological, and biological bases of educational practice; individual, community, and institutional habits; motives and values of the several school subjects; constants, electives, programmes, and courses of study; the rights and obligations of society and educators; pri-

¹ William Estabrook Chancellor, *A Theory of Motives, Ideals, and Values in Education*; Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1907.

mary and secondary motives in life; motives, ideals, and principles of the barbarian; the resistance of humanity to culture; qualities of the well-educated man; method of growth in civilization; the line of march in civilization; common attitude toward death, the necessity of evil, and the meaning of life—certainly no thoughtful man can consider this array without receiving an overwhelming impression of the range of thought involved in Dr. Chancellor's conception of educational theory.

After a careful study of the book, the reader emerges in a half-dazed condition, his chief impression being that of a series of startling kaleidoscopic changes, many of them original in conception, adequate in execution, and significant in meaning, but, as a whole, lacking intelligible co-ordination and interpretation. The book is informing, encyclopedic, and highly suggestive. Its title leads one to expect a well-defined theory of education closely correlating the varied and complex considerations indicated in the catalogue of topics given above. In the early pages of the book, the reader surmises that Dr. Chancellor intends to offer an organizing conception in his idea that all human activities and interests are probably, even necessarily, comprehended in any adequate statement of the meaning of education. However significant this idea may be as a principle of interpretation, one feels in reading the book that, without a more systematic and fundamental discussion of its implications and presuppositions, the idea does not provide a complete satisfactory basis for educational theory. The book is philosophical in conception, but it can hardly be said to have a philosophy.

In fairness, the author himself should be allowed to state what he considers the most central ideas in the book. These, he states in his preface (p. vii), are as follows:

1. The assertion of the universal rather than the mediate place and value of education, as an integral social institution.
2. The presentation in a hierarchical form of the evidences of education as its successively higher ideals.
3. The discovery of the true relations of motives, values, and ideals by arranging these terms logically.
4. The emphasis of the philosophic spirit underlying and establishing the modern course of study and mode of administration.

5. The development of a system based upon the proposition of the necessity of the complete education of each and all.

These principles and their corollaries, the author states, he has sought "not to substantiate, but to demonstrate" in the firm belief "not that these should be the principles of education, but that they are the principles." It will be well, accordingly, in making an estimate of the book, to accept as successive points of departure the several principles announced by the author as fundamental.

1. *Education as an integral social institution.* In his second chapter entitled "Values of the Social Institutions," the author outlines what he calls the "characteristic motives" of the fundamental social institutions—property, family, church, state, school, culture, business, and war. The so-called "motives" of these eight institutions are merely distinguished rather than related in any compact and unified system. The motive of property is said to be "self-realization through ownership," and he adds, the "melody of property is the funeral dirge of the spirit." The characteristic motive of the family is given as self-sacrifice; of the church as self-abnegation. The motives of the state, the school, and the other institutions are not stated with the directness and simplicity observed in the case of the first three in the list. The state is apparently conceived of as having entered into an unholy alliance with property on one hand and with the school on the other in its mad struggle for supremacy. In return for its favor, the school has secured the support of the state for its own maintenance, and property has secured illegitimate privileges. This triple alliance, in the view of the author, has been accomplished by the state for its own protection in the "terrific struggle between the state and business for the control of society." While this momentous warfare is going on, "the other institutions are standing by as little more than onlookers. The church, indeed, and the family are disintegrating before our eyes."

This arrogant assumption by which the modern democratic state conceives itself to be coterminous with society, thinks the author, will if not checked result in the "mad delusion" of a state-society which is a far more dreadful notion than the historic

state-church. "Vast as the state is today," he continues, "it is nevertheless a secondary and subordinate institution," and society will produce yet other institutions "to reduce the state to smaller pretensions and to greater efficiency in its proper field" (p. 44). It is in this connection that the author enunciates his doctrine of the autonomy of the school as an institution, although the clearest statement of the idea is found in a subsequent chapter (xxv), in which we read that "the school constitutes a complete idea; and the idea itself takes on a certain newness that this book endeavors to explain. . . . The idea of education as a perfectly differentiated, completely integral, and absolutely independent social institution appears rational and therefore authoritative" (p. 492).

There is, of course, much vital significance in the conception of the institutional independence of the school. All thinkers would doubtless agree that there is need for a greater degree of professional as distinguished from lay control of education. One can hardly avoid the conviction, however, that the distinctions between the various institutions, as proposed by Dr. Chancellor, are abstract and academic rather than practical and social; and that the school must continue to sustain most intimate relations, as to its organization and control, with the family, the state, and property, even at the expense of some subserviency and lack of efficiency. The failures of democracy are many and obvious; but after all they are *our* failures and we have rational grounds for our faith that, through our very shortcomings, we shall ever more closely approach the reality of efficient and triumphant democracy.

2. *The hierarchy of educational ideals.* Under the titles of "the evidences of education" and "the evidences of culture," constituting Parts III and IV of the book, are presented what the author regards as the successively higher ideals of education. These are intelligence, efficiency, morality, science, art, philosophy, health, and holiness. These ideals are somewhat fantastically considered as belonging to two successively higher series or cycles of development. To the first cycle belong intelligence, efficiency, and morality; to the second, science, art, and philosophy; health and holiness being the final and most inclusive perfection of which the finite soul is capable.

Each of the members of the second cycle, furthermore, is regarded as the culmination or realization of the corresponding member of the first cycle; science of intelligence, art of efficiency, and philosophy of morality. On the basis of these two series of closely related ideals, the author proposes his system of principles underlying the modern course of study, which constitutes the fourth organizing idea of the book as enumerated above.

While there is an evident tendency, in the discussion of this hierarchy of ideals, to sacrifice concreteness to a preconceived notion of symmetry, there is for the serious student of education much of genuinely stimulating value in these seven chapters. Following a characteristic tendency of present educational thinking, the author adds his protest against identifying education with merely intellectual discipline. By giving a logical and abstract rather than psychological and social cast to his analysis, however, the author comes dangerously near to a repetition in new form of the discredited "faculty" theory of education. In place of memory, imagination, judgment, and the other general powers that constitute the ideals of the older view, Dr. Chancellor sets up intelligence, efficiency, and morality. These latter ends, it is true, lend themselves more naturally to statement in social terms, but in point of fact they are stated in rather bare psychological and non-social terms. In the discussion of intelligence, for example (pp. 104 ff.), there is much said concerning the development of literacy, definition of thought, and accuracy and variety of sense-perception. Very little consideration is given, however, to concrete social demands for specific forms of intelligence; for an intelligent understanding of representative government, of industrial organization, of the economy of the home, of the rearing of children, of charity organization, of the principles underlying the choice of vocation, and of a hundred other vital social issues. Similarly, in the discussion of efficiency and morality, though in a less conspicuous degree, the trend of thought is toward the isolated and abstract rather than toward the concrete and social.

This disregard or evasion of specific social standards is, in fact, the most conspicuous limitation of the book. In our educa-

tional practice we have been slow to accept even the most rational and obvious principles of the social theory as set forth by Professor Dewey and his followers. In the interest of a reasonable and early readjustment of our educational programme, it is therefore highly desirable that every possible opportunity be utilized to emphasize the validity and urgency of the social principle, and to give it a concrete and convincing interpretation. On this account it is disappointing to find a thinker and practitioner of Dr. Chancellor's attainments and influence placing himself conspicuously and deliberately among the ranks of those who still follow the standard of psychological and ethical abstraction. Throughout the book may be found such statements as "one must regard the individual as of greater value than society or the race itself" (p. 7). Such statements betray an unwarranted opposition between the welfare of the individual and the good of society. Fortunately, however, the author does not hold consistently to this antithesis. The book is courageously and magnificently inconsistent. On one page (70), we read that "the school is not life . . . but preparation for life;" further on (p. 490) we are told with emphasis that "the life in the school . . . (is) as much a reality as any other." In the striking chapter on "The Failure of Education," we are warned that "true education . . . cannot be measured in terms of preparation for social service;" that the "philosophy of education for ends" necessarily breaks down (p. 99); and yet, at a hundred different points we find clear statements of social and psychological "ends" that education is expected to serve. Among the ends proposed are the preparation of youth for citizenship (p. 103), the development of accuracy, fulness, and variety of the senses (p. 204), the cultivation of health as "an end in itself" (p. 418), "to produce the well-educated man" (p. 465), "to develop power to understand modern human life" (p. 479), and "bringing the economic workers . . . to their highest possible state" (p. 13). These are but a few of the illustrations furnished by the book of the impossibility of considering, in a truly informing way, the problems of individual development apart from the social

relationships that give them their most characteristic and most truly human significance.

3. *The relations of motives, values, and ideals.* On account of the prominence given by the title of the book to this topic, the reader approaches the discussion with stimulated interest. At the outset one meets a puzzling contradiction in the uses of the term "motive" itself. Somewhat generally throughout the book, the term is apparently intended to convey the sense attached to it in common usage as, for example, in the discussion of "right social motives" (p. 97), of "the motive in education" (pp. 163, 386, and 479), and of the motives for the study of "the conventional studies and exercises in education and culture" in the chapter on "Motives and Values of Subjects" (pp. 383 ff.). Turning, however, to the chapter on "The Natural Man: His Motives, Ideals, and Principles," we find an unusual and almost mystifying definition of the term. It is to certain "personal moods or modes" that, we are here told, "psychology has given the special name of motives" (p. 443). "The primary and one absolutely essential motive in the individual is to live." Apparently the term "motive" is here used as synonymous with native reaction or instinct, and this signification is continued in the distinction that is made between "motive," "desire," and "purpose." "Motive is wholly unconscious, desire is subconscious, purpose fully conscious; stated otherwise, motive is pure will, desire is will and feeling, purpose is will and intellection" (pp. 443, 444).

In the chapter on "The New Education" we find a further refinement in the use of the term "motive" in an attempt to define the relations between motives, ideals, and values. Another brief quotation will illustrate a striking characteristic of the author's manner:

Every motive has a reason because of which it exists; the persistence of the reason in unconsciousness produces its evolution into motive and characterizes it as such. . . . Every motive has also always a judgment regarding the ideal; this judgment is its valuation of the ideal. . . . Motive is in the depths of the man. . . . Ideals are upon the periphery of unconsciousness, motive is at its center, value relates center to circumference; and the whole constitutes the entire circle of unconsciousness. It

may seem, at first, a contradiction in terms to assert a psychology of unconsciousness; yet we may know it by its manifested acts (p. 143).

It is, of course, unfair to base a judgment of any book upon detached passages. The sentences quoted are given as illustrations of a general tendency of the author to use terms without great regard to their common meaning, to propose subtle distinctions that do not serve a definite and useful purpose in the development of his theses, and to indulge freely his remarkable power of making brilliant, sententious, but not always clarifying statements.

4. *The philosophical spirit underlying the modern course of study and mode of administration.* As previously stated, the author bases his evaluation of "cultural subjects and systems of exercises" upon his "hierarchy" of educational ideals. The discussion of the course of study therefore obviously reduces itself to a consideration of the subjects adapted to the development of "intelligence, efficiency, morality; science, art, philosophy, health and holiness." The consideration of the values of subjects proceeds after a fashion quite familiar in the history of educational thought. As the author himself frankly admits, "It is an old world in a new guise. And yet there is really nothing new here." Nature-study, geography, and industrial art are checked off as contributing freely to the development of observation ("the pathway to intelligence"); the operation of numbers as promoting efficiency; literature as cultivating emotion, understanding, and sympathy; and so on through the list. We read much of "content" and "method" and of their respective functions. "The old school ideals" are sharply criticized because

subjected to our analysis, not one of them [subjects] rises higher than the plane of science, and most of them are upon the lower levels of intelligence and efficiency. These ideals are not untrue but inadequate. Not one of them has the abstract dignity of art and philosophy, but all are weighted with the concrete (p. 395).

In the discussion of "constants, electives, programmes, and courses" (chap. xx), the author again applies his "dialectic of growth," the hierarchy of ideals. Play, nature-study and the

natural sciences, the vernacular, music, and drawing are categorically set down as "constants for all the educable and cultivable ages." Besides these, we read, "there are certain other constants for particular ages." Thus arithmetic is given as "a constant in the education of boys and girls from eight to sixteen years of age," and geometry and the algebraic equation as constants "for children and youth from twelve to twenty years of age" (p. 427). Electives take their places as "but varieties of the constants," adapted to the specific psychological requirements of individual children. "Does not the need of society properly influence, to an important degree, the presentation of certain subjects in the classroom?" pertinently asks the author. Promptly and without indirection he adds his reply: "Again, I answer, No" (p. 431).

5. *Necessity of the complete education of each and of all.* Few competent thinkers, in America at any rate, will hesitate to accept Dr. Chancellor's thesis in which he maintains that education "should be for civilized mankind a universal enterprise." "By the universal, independent, systematic school," he declares, "democracy intends seriously to help each and every individual to realize the most of himself, society the most of itself, and humanity as much as possible of its inherited, inheritable, and attainable likeness to God" (p. 493). The spirit, at least, of this thought is certainly now widely accepted.

It is not so clear, however, that the author's proposition of the "necessity" of the complete education of every individual can find ready agreement. Necessity, with its suggestion of finality, arouses the suspicion of the reader. In the development of his proposition, the author himself asserts that educability is unaffected by physique, race, or time; and that "to say that no more may be brought forth (educated) from a man than was born in him is to utter a mere combination of words." There is an evident determination to minimize the results of recent investigations concerning the influence of heredity in determining mental and moral traits, and yet the author admits that "the mediocre man . . . cannot and therefore does not know certain things," and adds that he is seeking "to dispel a possible

illusion that by some manner of educational wonder-working slight ability and energy can be converted into great talent" (p. 93). Of the anti-social "perverters of the good," he goes so far as to say that "it does not appear that education or religion can ever cure their ills and make them good" (p. 461), though in another connection he says, concerning this same class, "education is . . . always and essentially the religion of the faith that all are the sons of God, and that as long as He lives even the worst may be redeemed" (p. 111).

Notwithstanding his announcement of the "necessity of the complete education of each and all," the author falls short of a completely rational statement of a theory of democracy in education. Any attempt to base such a theory upon the notion of fraternity, as commonly interpreted, must inevitably lead to hopeless contradiction; for the notion cannot be harmonized with the obvious inequalities and individual differences due to racial, social, and family inheritance and to variation from ancestral type. Genuine equality of educational opportunity must be based upon a recognition of the specific needs of children as determined by their actual capacities, tastes, and prospective careers.

If this estimate has seemed to place somewhat undue emphasis upon the limitations of Dr. Chancellor's book, it has not been for lack of appreciation of the positive contributions that the work makes to current educational theory. In fact, its very elements of chief significance are, in a sense, the explanation of the defects of the book; for, in the present state of educational thinking, it is probably too much to expect extensive range and authoritative philosophical insight in the work of a single man. Dr. Chancellor has given us a contribution of really remarkable scope, with suggestions on almost every page of points at which a vital theory of education touches men's thought and appreciation and conduct. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when we shall have a work of equal importance that shall bring into coherent philosophical relation the numberless lines of significant thought into which this book leads.